



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

No, Prime Minister

Citation for published version:

Kaarbo, J & Kenealy, D 2016, 'No, Prime Minister: Explaining the House of Commons' Vote on Intervention in Syria' *European Security*, vol. 25, no. 1. DOI: 10.1080/09662839.2015.1067615

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/09662839.2015.1067615](https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2015.1067615)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

European Security

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *European Security* on 12/09/2015, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/09662839.2015.1067615>

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



No, Prime Minister: Explaining the House of Commons' Vote on Intervention in Syria

Juliet Kaarbo and Daniel Kenealy, *University of Edinburgh*

Forthcoming in *European Security*

On 29 August 2013 the UK House of Commons inflicted the first defeat on a Prime Minister over a matter of war and peace since 1782. Recalled to debate and vote on UK intervention in Syria, the Commons humbled the government and crucially impacted the development of UK foreign policy. This article places that vote, and the developments leading to it, in the context of the role of parliaments in security policy and explores the relationships between parliamentary influence, leadership, intra-party and intra-coalition politics, and public opinion. From an in-depth analysis of leaders' statements and parliamentary debate, we find a combination of intra-party politics and party leadership were most significant. An additional factor – the role of historical precedent – was also important. Our analysis explores the fluidity and interconnectedness of the various factors for parliamentary influence in foreign policy and offers directions for future theoretical development and empirical research.

Keywords: foreign policy analysis; decision-making; UK foreign policy; parliaments.

‘A leader humbled, a nation cut down to size’ (Rachman 2013). That was how one commentator summarised the 29 August 2013 vote in the House of Commons, a vote that resulting in the first defeat for a British prime minister (PM on a matter of war and peace since 1782.¹ Just a few days earlier, PM David Cameron had been confident of securing parliamentary support for UK participation in a U.S.-led military strike against Syria. The vote took the possibility of UK military involvement off the table. The vote triggered calls for parliamentary debate in Paris and Washington. Ultimately, no military strikes against Syria were taken at that time. In the words one Labour MP, ‘this was a great parliamentary moment and it did affect events. There was no bombing’ (*BBC* 2014).

This was an unusual case of a parliament defying a PM’s preference on a decision to deploy military force. This vote was unprecedented in UK politics and challenges conventional wisdom that Westminster has little influence in security policy. Yet this case also resembles instances of parliamentary influence elsewhere and the factors that explain this vote are consistent with other cases. After a brief description of the backdrop to the vote, we establish the theoretical context of parliaments’ role in security policy, setting out the general expectation that parliaments are not particularly influential. At the heart of the article we consider – through a consolidation of previous research – factors that facilitate parliamentary influence in security policy and examine the impact they each had in the Syria vote. In concluding, we use this case to suggest directions for future research. Our aim is to explain this particular vote and to advance research and understanding about the role of parliaments in security policy. We ground our analysis of parliamentary influence in a conceptualisation of political dynamics focusing on group and individual actors from a decision-making perspective.

The Domestic and International Context of the Vote

Cameron's preference for some form of intervention in the Syrian conflict was long signposted. As early as May 2011 he adopted a hawkish line and announced, in March 2013, that he was seriously considering arming the Syrian rebels, in violation of an agreed EU arms embargo (Stacey et al. 2013). This was consistent with Cameron's established instinct towards liberal interventionism, most prominently displayed in response to the Libyan civil war of 2011 (Beech 2011; Beech and Oliver 2014). After the 21 August 2013 chemical attack in Damascus, Cameron and Obama agreed that a robust response was required from the international community if credible evidence suggested the Syrian government was responsible (Chulov and Helm 2013).

Syrian president Assad agreed to admit UN inspectors to the attack site the next day, after suggestions from both US and UK governments that military action was likely. The inspectors arrived in Syria on 26 August but struggled to gain access to the sites, delaying completion of their work (*BBC* 2013b). Military commanders in the US, France, and the UK began to discuss plans for a 48-hour cruise missile attack against military assets inside Syria (*Financial Times* 2013). In an attempt to build legitimacy for any strike, the UK moved to secure a UN Security Council resolution (Ross 2013). It quickly became clear that both Russia and China opposed such a resolution (*BBC* 2013c). Regional actors such as Iran criticised any military action while Jordan announced it would not permit any strikes to be launched from its territory.

Against this backdrop of division and uncertainty in the international community, Cameron returned early from vacation and recalled Parliament for a vote. Alongside William Hague (UK Foreign Secretary) and Nick Clegg (UK Deputy PM and Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the coalition government), Cameron met with opposition Labour party leader Ed Miliband on 27 August. At that meeting, Miliband stressed that support from Labour would only be offered for action that was “legal, specifically limited to deterring the future use of chemical weapons” and has “clear and achievable military goals” (Rigby and Pickard 2013). In a call to Cameron that evening, Miliband reportedly emphasised the need to give the UN inspectors time to conclude their work (Pickard et al. 2013).

The following day Miliband met again with Cameron and was shown a draft of the government motion – authorising the use of military force – that would be put before the Commons. Reports differ as to whether Miliband indicated he would support the government but by the end of 28 August it was clear that Miliband’s Labour opposition would not offer such support. Instead the opposition would table a separate motion – a roadmap to the use of force emphasising the need for a full report from UN inspectors before any action – to be voted on alongside the government motion. This prompted Cameron to amend his own motion to make it clear that a second vote would be required prior to any UK military action (Mason 2013). Labour’s shadow foreign secretary, Douglas Alexander, stated that members of his party ‘were open to supporting the government ... We were continuing, throughout that week, to probe and ask questions ... [It is] not the job of the opposition to give a blank cheque to a government contemplating military action’ (BBC 2014). A government insider has suggested that Miliband expressed clear support on Tuesday

only to equivocate on Wednesday, sniffing a chance to score a political win (*BBC* 2014).

MPs convened on Thursday, 29 August to debate and vote on a government motion *and* an opposition amendment that were very similar: both called for a second vote to be held before any military action.² One government insider remarked that there was ‘bugger all’ between the two (*BBC* 2014). Cameron opened the debate with a forceful statement, which sought to: establish the legality of any strikes in the absence of an explicit UN Security Council resolution; reinforce the idea that no UK military involvement would occur without a second, explicit vote in Parliament; emphasise the difference between proposed action in Syria and the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and stress that any military action would be a narrow response to the use of chemical weapons and not the beginning of a broader effort at regime change or deep involvement in the on-going conflict (Hansard, 29 Aug 2013: Col. 1425-40).

Despite Cameron’s arguments, hours later the government motion was defeated. The outcome of the vote was stunning. Neither motion was supported. The government proposal was defeated 285 to 272 votes. Cameron, visibly surprised, confirmed that the UK would not participate in military action against Syria under any circumstances and that he had no intention of bringing the issue back to the Commons for further consideration.

Parliamentary Influence in Security Policy

The vote presents a challenge to conventional understandings of parliamentary influence in security policy and to the traditional picture of the Commons in the Westminster model of governance. Indeed, the vote surprised Cameron and many

observers of British politics given the UK parliament's weak reputation in foreign policy generally, and security policy specifically, and its tendency when consulted to respond with strong cross-party consensus in support of PMs' preferences (see Joseph 2013). Exceptions include opposition to Tony Blair's position on Iraq in 2003 from within his own party, but overall, the Commons has been described as 'weak and reactive: a legislature that chooses never to bite, a tiger muzzled by partisan politics' (Heffernan 2005: 68). As Hill (2003: 255) notes 'executives have been able to circumvent parliamentary powers without difficulty'.

This reading of the role of the Commons in security policy resonates with general conventional wisdom on parliamentary influence (Author 2010). Indeed, there is little systematic research on parliaments' role in security policy because it is *assumed* that parliaments are unimportant (see Peters and Wagner 2011). Despite appointment by and accountability to parliament, cabinets generally lead in decision-making and parliaments follow, often only rubber-stamping decisions. As Weaver and Rockman (1993: 17) argue, a 'determined parliamentary government can...do as it wishes, so long as it has a legislative majority.' Modern political parties have multiple mechanisms for enforcing party discipline and most votes predictably support the government's position.

Parliaments are particularly weak in 'high politics' and security policy (see Ku 2004). Parliaments lack the knowledge and expertise to challenge powerful foreign and defence ministries and 'most parliamentarians remain quite parochial and national in their concerns' (Greene 2004: 30). In addition, the need to present a united front toward 'the enemy' is a security imperative by which parliaments often abide. Legislative deference to government and party leaders is quite common and once

hostilities commence, parliamentarians tend to rally behind the government (Peters and Wagner 2011).

Recent research, however, challenges this conventional view of parliamentary weakness in security policy (Author 2010). Work inspired by Putnam's (1988) two-level game metaphor has examined how parliaments can shape domestic win-sets (the range of acceptable options to domestic constituents) through ratification and veto powers, which affects both the likelihood of international agreements and the advantages that domestic constraints can give leaders in international bargaining (Pahre 1997; Martin 2001; Hill 2003). Research on the role of political oppositions (Hagan 1993) and decision units (Hagan and Hermann 2001) also notes the importance of parliaments as centres for opposition and as potential veto players in fluid and dynamic decision making practices that exist alongside institutional authority. Parliamentary accountability is identified as one mechanisms underlying the structural explanation of the democratic peace (the notable lack of war between dyads of democracies) (Wagner 2006). Dietrich et al. (2008) argue that the democratic peace should be characterised as the 'parliamentary peace' because parliaments are the democratic institutions most likely to respond to war-averse public opinion. Unpacking the structural explanation of the democratic peace, research has examined varying levels of parliamentary constraints. This diverse research demonstrates the presence of parliaments in foreign and security policy and offers implicit suggestions on the conditions under which parliaments are important.³

From this wide-ranging research, we consolidate and specify several facilitating factors for parliamentary influence in security policy. They include:

- Institutional powers of parliament;

- Public opinion;
- Cabinet type;
- Intraparty factions; and
- Prime Ministerial (PM) leadership style.

These factors can, and often do, act together, but here we present the logic of each separately. Furthermore, none are deterministic; there are caveats to the logic of each of them. Following a comparative, general analysis of factors for parliamentary influence in foreign and security policy, we apply these to the Syria vote.

Institutional, Legal and Constitutional Authority

Parliaments with more institutional, legal, and constitutional authority in foreign affairs are in a better position to influence security policy. Research on two-level games, decision units, and the democratic peace notes real variation in parliamentary powers in foreign affairs (see Pahre 1997; Wagner 2006; Mello 2012). Born (2004: 209-11) classifies parliamentary powers in security affairs in terms of ‘authority’ (‘the power which Parliament uses to hold government accountable ... derived from the constitutional and legal framework as well as customary practices’), ‘ability’ (the parliamentary resources of special committees, budget and staff necessary to use legal authority), and ‘attitude’ (the ‘willingness to hold the executive to account’). Focusing specifically on legal and constitutional war powers (including budgetary control, oversight, and the right to veto executive use of force), Peters and Wagner (2011: 175) find a range of models parliamentary roles, ‘from complete exclusion to a comprehensive veto position of parliament over all potential deployments. In between these two extremes, democracies have found a wide variety of solutions’. They report,

for example, that less than one third of democracies hold ex ante veto power over military missions (Peters and Wagner 2011). Democratic peace research that unpacks institutional accountability in parliaments has also focused on the degree of executive autonomy from the legislature and treaty ratification powers (Peterson 1995).

These differences have policy consequences. Consider the Iraq case: countries with parliaments having only ‘basic’ or ‘deficient’ war powers became more involved militarily, while those with ‘comprehensive’ powers made little or no contribution (Dieterich et al. 2008). In their study on variation in treaty ratification procedures, Reiter and Tillman (2002) found that countries affording stronger voice to legislatures in treaties were less likely to initiate militarized interstate disputes. Beyond formal ratification and war powers, parliaments can play an important role in security policy through their ability to supervise, scrutinize, and investigate, and through budgetary controls (Hill 2003).

Some argue there is a trend toward institutionalisation of parliamentary influence in foreign affairs (Damrosch 2003; Raunio and Wiberg 2001). Yet, in their study of post-Cold War trends in parliamentary powers, Peters and Wagner (2011: 185) conclude that veto powers have not increased and that ‘parliaments usually lose powers when existing provisions are substantially modified’. Furthermore, they argue that NATO expansion and the rise of multilateral operations negatively affected parliamentary control over deployment decisions.

There are three important caveats to the institutional, legal, and constitutional authority factor. First, as Pahre (1997) notes, it can be misleading to think of parliamentary power as separate from, and exogenous to, cabinets and executives in parliamentary systems since the executive is born out of the parliament and the parties in the cabinet are also in the legislature. Second, decision units research (on the

different types of decision units that can form with each decision point) shows that policy authority is often more fluid than implied by strictly institutional or constitutional readings of parliamentary powers (Hagan and Hermann 2001). Which players are involved in decision-making and whether parliament chooses to use its powers is often contested and sometimes negotiated by domestic political actors and can depend on political conditions. Third, research on partisanship in security policy suggests that institutional power-sharing alone is not sufficient to explain parliamentary influence (Mello 2004; Schuster and Maier 2006). Party ideology matters in security policy – not all PMs and cabinets are pro-intervention and not all parliaments are pro-peace.

Public Opinion

Security issues that are salient to the public, and public opinion that challenges the government's preference, can facilitate parliamentary influence in security policy (Reiter and Tillman 2002; Dietrich et al 2009; Author 2010). If the cabinet is out of touch with the sense of the country, parliaments may play their role of representing the will of the people. Unlike the cabinet, which is accountable to parliament, MPs are directly accountable to and elected by the public. Thus, MPs not serving in government may be more sensitive to public opinion and see public opposition as an opportunity to make electoral gains, particularly if an election is looming.

This is especially true for opposition parties. With few other routes for influencing policy, opposition parties can seize on public opinion to force a role for parliament in foreign policy. Given public opposition, ruling parties may also use parliaments to provide legitimacy for security operations and to avoid subsequent criticism by parliamentary opposition. According to Peters and Wagner (2011: 183-

84) this may, in certain cases, ‘give parliamentarians some influence on the operation ... consultations may become such a common practice that it develops into a de facto obligation that is acknowledged by both government and parliament even in the absence of any legal obligation’.

One caveat to this factor is that public opinion may have a direct impact on foreign policy, completely bypassing parliament. In other words, the PM and cabinet may also be sensitive to public opposition and change policy to comply. Evidence for this direct role of public opinion is decidedly mixed (see Holsti 2002). It is more likely that parliament and government together persuade and manipulate public opinion to support a policy, or ignore it altogether (Kreps 2010; Rathbun 2004; Schuster and Maier 2006). Denmark and Lithuania are cases where substantial parliamentary war powers exist and where public opinion opposed participation in the 2003 Iraq war, but where both governments supported intervention anyway (Dieterich et al. 2008). Finally, as Peters and Wagner (2011: 183-84) note, ‘when the involvement of parliament is exclusively at the government’s discretion, there is a fine line between meaningful consultation with parliament and the goal of simply having executive decisions rubber-stamped’.

Coalition Government

A governing elite that is divided and institutionalised in a coalition government is another factor facilitating parliamentary influence in security policy. Coalitions are often seen as inherently fragile and weak, and more vulnerable to parliamentary pressures (Auerswald 1999; Palmer et al. 2004). Whereas a single party cabinet ‘can count on legislative approval for its ... policy positions largely because voting against the government implies handing it over to the opposition’, coalition partners may

disagree over security policy and then may go to parliament to seek support from other parties (Elman 2000: 98). For this reason, and the built-in multiple veto players coalitions, democratic peace researchers have argued that coalitions will be more constrained in security policy than single-party counterparts (Maoz and Russett 1993).

Others suggest the dynamics of coalition politics can produce hijacking of policy by junior parties with blackmail potential and disproportionate influence and diversionary behaviour with extreme foreign policies designed to distract publics and parliaments from coalition fragility (Hagan 1993; Elman 2000). Quantitative research on this question has produced mixed results. Coalitions are associated with more extreme foreign policies, and coalitions with less parliamentary strength engage in more extreme behaviours, suggesting unique dynamics between coalitions and parliaments (Author 2014). Some qualitative research also suggests an increased role for parliaments during coalition governments as junior partners may seek to move the locus of authority to parliament where they perceive support from other others for their position (Author 1996; Author 2012).

Three caveats are important. First, coalition partners often agree on security policy, leaving no room for parliamentary intervention. Second, coalition partners often work out their differences within the coalition. Even if the government falls over a security policy issue, it may be due to one partner withdrawing from the coalition and parliament may not be involved. Finally, coalitions may act no differently than factionalized single parties. Leblang and Chan (2003) argue that consensual politics of intra-party consultation may be just as constraining as competitive politics of inter-party consultation.

Intraparty Factionalism

When leaders cannot discipline their party, parliaments become involved in decision-making. Parties may be factionalized on the specific policy, on the general policy orientation, or on personal or political lines for which foreign policy may be strategically used to shore up support intra-party party. Although there is little work on the effects of intraparty politics on foreign policy (see Hazan 2000), research on political oppositions suggests that single-party governments with ‘well-defined internal divisions’ may have to deal with difficult parliamentary backbenchers (Hagan 1993).

One caveat is that even if divisions exist, leaders have many institutional, political, and normative sources for influencing party discipline (see Kam 2009; Andeweg and Thomassen 2010). Also, as Hazan (2000) points out, intraparty factionalism does not occur in a vacuum and is connected to public opinion in complicated ways – party factions may be driven by and responsive to cleavages in public opinion and may hinder party leaders’ abilities to ‘sell’ a policy to the public.

PM Leadership

Leaders are not all equally and rationally tuned to opposition within their parties or in parliament. Leaders also vary in their skills for and orientations toward conflict management. Thus, PM leadership style is another factor for parliamentary influence in security policy. PMs vary significantly in their background and experience, their beliefs and personality traits, their motivations for seeking office, and their preferred ways for gathering information, reviewing policy options, and dealing with conflict (Author 1997). Work on leaders in decision units research points to a key difference in leadership style – some leaders are much more open to information than others and

some are much more likely to challenge constraints (Hermann 2003). Some leaders may dismiss parliament as a distraction, while others believe it prudent or normatively ideal to consult parliament.

In handling parliamentary opposition, leaders also often make mistakes – they misperceive the level and nature of the opposition (see Evans et al. 1993; Dyson 2006), or they ineffectively manage the parliamentary process, opening the door to victory for intra-party or opposition voices. In the Turkish parliamentary vote not to allow Turkey to serve as a base in the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example, the political leadership was indecisive, wanted to defer responsibility, and assumed they would win without enforcing party discipline. As a result, they were quite surprised at their loss (Author 2010).

As with the other factors of parliamentary influence, PM leadership style is not deterministic. A leader who correctly perceives the level of parliamentary opposition and takes steps to effectively address it may still lose a parliamentary vote. And leaders who mismanage parliamentary opposition may still ‘luck out’, with other factors affecting their parliamentary victory.

Explaining the Commons’ Vote on Syria

How well do the general factors of parliamentary influence account for the Syria vote? In this section, we consider the role of the factors identified above. We also explore other dynamics that were important in this case but have not been directly addressed in previous research on parliaments and security policy.

Institutional, Legal and Constitutional Authority

It is problematic to attribute Parliament's role in this vote to any specific institutional, legal or constitutional authority. The UK Parliament is at the 'weak' end of a spectrum of control over security policy, in comparative perspective (White 2003; DCAF 2006; Dieterich et al. 2008; Peters and Wagner 2011). Deploying UK military force is a Royal Prerogative – 'the residue of discretionary or arbitrary authority, which at any given time is legally left in the hands of the Crown', the executive (Dicey 1959: 24). The authority to deploy the UK's armed forces, constitutionally, resides in the collective responsibility of the cabinet, led by the PM. This is consistent with the Westminster model of governance characterised by top-down decision-making processes and centralisation of power; it is 'a "power-hoarding" or "power-concentrating" model of democracy' (Gaskarth 2013: 28; see also Strong 2014;). Overall, UK cabinets have considerable ability to bypass parliament and the democratic process when making security policy (Burrall et al. 2006).

There is no constitutional requirement to consult parliament in advance. Recent cases of deployment demonstrate this. The UK's military missions in Afghanistan were never subject to a vote between the original deployment in 2001 and continued operations through 2010. The 2011 deployment in Libya was only authorised post-hoc by the Commons. Indeed, as Strong (2014: 5) notes the Commons 'held a substantive vote over military action on just one occasion during the 20th century, over the Korean War.'

A focus on the Royal Prerogative and the centralisation of power in the Westminster Model ignores, however, some avenues of parliamentary influence in the UK. The parliamentary committee system, for example, allows MPs to scrutinise the work of government departments including those responsible for foreign affairs, security and defence. Recent developments, such as the election of committee chairs,

may serve to strengthen the influence of such committees. Beyond committees, Parliament has always reserved the power to talk about security policy. It does so frequently although it is not an especially effective tool for influence. Governments remain free to ignore such debates and, given that such debates are often adjournment debates, votes are rare and typically inconsequential. At times, however, parliamentary debates can influence policy. For example, Thatcher's 1982 deployment of a taskforce to the Falklands was connected to the uproar in the Commons, which met in emergency session (Moore 2013). Similarly, in the months-long build-up to the Iraq war several MPs pressured Blair to hold a parliamentary debate and a substantive vote, which he ultimately did (Strong 2014). Underlying all of this is the reality that UK cabinets rely, for their survival, on commanding a parliamentary majority. Parliament thus retains capacity to bring down a government. The loss of confidence in PM Eden in 1957, for example, was connected to a security issue, namely the Suez crisis (Hennessy 2000).

There are indications of changing norms and efforts to strengthen parliamentary authority in security policy, particularly since 2003 and the Commons' vote on Iraq. Successive governments have, rhetorically at least, signalled their support for the notion that Blair's action constituted a new precedent.⁴ Strong (2014: 2) argues that a 'Parliamentary Prerogative' has evolved such that 'Parliament now decides when Britain goes to war'. He traces this development from the 2003 Iraq vote, through Cameron's decision in 2011 as the UK was participating in the use of force against Libya, to Cameron's 2013 defeat on Syria.

After 2003, a series of bills were considered to formalise the role of Parliament although none progressed far. Inquiries by committees of both the House of Commons (2004) and House of Lords (2006) concluded that steps should be taken to

strengthen the role of the UK Parliament. Despite these efforts, there was no movement on this issue during the 2005-2010 parliament.⁵ The coalition government that entered office in May 2010 expressed a willingness to formalise the precedent, with Foreign Secretary Hague suggesting to enshrine ‘in law for the future the necessity of consulting parliament on military action’ (Hansard 2011: Col. 799). Ultimately, however, no bill materialised and the record of parliamentary influence during the 2010-2015 parliament was inconsistent.

Although the Commons authorised UK intervention in Libya in 2011, the vote occurred after the intervention had begun. The Commons thus approved a decision that had already been taken and put into effect by the PM and cabinet, in partnership with France and coordinated through NATO. Conscious of the difficulty involved in voting to bring troops back home days after they are sent into action, MPs secured an assurance from Hague that, in future, Parliament would be recalled to debate and vote prior to any deployment. Despite this assurance, in 2013 the UK government deployed military assets and military personnel (in non-combat roles) to Mali without a parliamentary vote. During 2013, as the Syrian situation deteriorated and Cameron signalled his desire to intervene in some capacity, the issue of parliament’s role resurfaced. In June 2013 there was some confusion within the cabinet as Hague suggested that any form of intervention, even if amounting to no more than arming the Syrian rebels, would be subject to a substantive vote in the Commons (*The Guardian* 2013). Days later, however, Cameron asserted that the government reserved the ‘ability to act very swiftly’ and without a parliamentary vote (*BBC* 2013a).

It is thus impossible to attribute the role of the Commons in the Syrian vote simply to strengthened institutional or legal capacity. UK PMs may increasingly feel *political* pressure to hold a vote ahead of the deployment of military force, but they

are not *constitutionally* obliged to do so. Even if a norm of parliamentary prerogative has developed, votes remain rare (the 2011 vote on Libya was only the third vote on the use of force since 1950) and, before 2013, Parliament had supported the PM in every matter of war and peace since 1782.

Public Opinion

The public nevertheless supported Parliament having a role in any decision to deploy UK military force in Syria. One survey revealed that 61 per cent of respondents believed that the government should take military action with parliamentary approval (all survey figures are from YouGov 2013). Despite lacking constitutional authority, Parliament convened knowing that public opinion was supportive of it constraining the government. Public opposition to UK military action was clear in the days preceding the vote. One survey showed strong opposition to both missile strikes against sites inside Syria (50 per cent opposing, 26 per cent supporting, 25 per cent undecided) and to providing military support to the anti-Assad forces (61 per cent opposing, 13 per cent supporting, 26 per cent undecided). The only potential action that received a relatively close net score was the use of UK military power to enforce a no-fly zone over Syria (42 per cent opposing, 34 per cent supporting, 24 per cent undecided). General scepticism was expressed in opinion polls throughout the year, although some of the public favoured some type of action. In May 2013, 38 per cent of respondents were supportive of surgical air strikes to destroy chemical weapons facilities with 36 per cent opposed. Even earlier, in February 2012, 40 per cent of those polled responded that a no fly zone over Syria was necessary. Although these precise questions were not replicated in August polling it seems that ‘opinion had hardened since the spring against any military action’ (Kellner 2013).

The salience of such public opinion to MPs was notable during the debate in the Commons. Speakers frequently invoked poll results and almost all references in the debate linked public opposition to fallout from Iraq, a topic to which we return below. Prominent figures, including former Labour foreign secretary Jack Straw and former Conservative defence secretary Liam Fox, also directly referenced public opposition (Hansard 2013: Cols. 1450, 1452). Other vocal and recognisable MPs raised the issue as well (Cols. 1475-76, 1479, 1483, 1506, 1508, 1513, 1515, 1521, 1535).

Despite such frequent references, it is important to keep the role of public opinion in perspective. It is certainly not the case that the Commons simply followed the public. The tightness of the vote, and the fact that the vast majority of MPs cast a vote that kept the option of military force on the table, suggests that public opinion was not decisive. The mood of the public may, however, have played an indirect role. Had a majority of the public been supportive of military action Cameron may have committed and then held a retrospective vote, as with the 2011 Libya intervention. Such a scenario would have made it politically far more difficult for parliament to vote against the use of force (or, in that scenario, the continued use of force). Furthermore, public opinion – specifically a desire to be seen as both reflecting opinion and inflicting a defeat on the government in the name of public opinion – may have influenced Miliband’s decision not to back the government motion (*BBC* 2014).

Coalition Government

There is little evidence to suggest that the coalition itself (the first multiparty cabinet in the UK since 1945) was an important factor in this case. At no point did the Liberal Democrat party take a collective stance in opposition to the motion. Prominent figures within the junior coalition partner, including regarded experts in foreign affairs, spoke

publicly in support of the government motion (e.g. Ashdown 2013; and also Sir Menzies Campbell, see Hansard 2013: Col. 1455-57). Although the Liberal Democrat party president Tim Farron failed to vote for the government motion (although he did vote against Labour's amendment), he remained relatively quiet in the days preceding the vote (Whitehead 2013).

Clegg and other leading Liberal Democrat party figures authored an op-ed arguing for military action on the day of the vote (Clegg et al. 2013). Backing their leaders, the majority of MPs from both coalition parties voted for the government motion. Although it is true that some of the defection came from the Liberal Democrats (9 'no' votes, or 16% of the parliamentary party), more of the government's internal opposition came from within the Conservative party (30 'no' votes, or 10% of the parliamentary party). It is difficult to know if a single-party Conservative government would have succeeded, given the messiness of the vote – 27 Conservative MPs were absent (including 5 members of the government), along with 8 Liberal Democrats (including 3 members of the government).

Perhaps the only impact of the coalition government was in the chamber itself, as the closing speeches were given. The coalition parties shared the tasks of delivering the opening speech (by Cameron) and the closing remarks (by Clegg). It is generally accepted that Clegg's speech for the government was weak (Wigmore 2013). Douglas Alexander observed: 'I literally watched the government's support draining away as the deputy PM tried to wind up his arguments before ten o'clock' (*BBC* 2014). Alistair Burt, a foreign office minister at the time of the vote, echoed this sentiment: 'I was assuming, and hoping, that the foreign secretary would close the debate. That turned out not to be the case'. He went on: 'It was important to me because if anyone understood what was actually happening it was William Hague ... During the course

of the wind-up ... he [Clegg] couldn't speak with the authority of the foreign secretary' (*BBC* 2014).

If there was any possibility of a handful of wavering Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs being won over by strong closing speeches – and that is mere speculation – then Clegg's speech was arguably ill-suited to the task. The important point, however, is that the leadership of both parties in the coalition supported the government motion, as did the majority of MPs from their parties. Rather than coalition politics, or *inter*-party tensions, playing a decisive role in this defeat, *intra*-party divisions were far more significant.

Intraparty Factionalism

Both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties were internally divided on this issue. The Liberal Democrats are typically cautious over military action, adopting a multilateral, law-based approach to international affairs (Liberal Democrats 2010). The party opposed the 2003 war in Iraq in 'an extremely rare instance of dissent' from a tradition of cross-party consensus in foreign policy (Gaskarth 2013: 31). On the eve of the vote, Liberal Democrats MPs were sceptical that the evidence presented justified the planned intervention and the perception, it was reported, was that 'the wider political leadership ... [was] going to have to work a lot harder to get them on side' (Morris 2013). The concerns of those rebels or abstainers, who spoke publicly, either in the Commons or afterwards in the media, were broadly consistent. They saw a vote for the government motion as a first step towards inevitable military action. This point was well captured by one Liberal Democrat MP's comment that the motion 'puts a firm foot on the slippery slope towards military intervention ... by creating a climate and the mood music which makes it easier for such action to be taken in the

future' (Hansard 2013: Col. 1519). Other Liberal Democrat MPs echoed this 'slippery slope' argument (Col. 1499-1500).

Furthermore, Liberal Democrat rebels were both sceptical of the practical effect of any military strikes, with many favouring the continuation of humanitarian assistance and supporting a firmer UN process. At minimum a UN process required time for inspections to conclude. Several rebels argued for UN authorisation as prerequisite for any strikes. Liberal Democrats thus seemed divided between those content to vote for the government motion and accept its commitment to a second vote at face value, and those who doubted that commitment and who were sceptical of both the practical effect of military strikes and the legitimacy of action absent clear UN authorisation. Considering abstentions and absences, only 32 Liberal Democrat MPs out of a total of 57 (just 56 per cent) voted for the government, with 9 rebelling, a poor result for the party leadership.

Conservative intraparty factionalism was critical to the vote's outcome. In total, thirty Conservative MPs rebelled, with a further nine abstaining whilst voting against the Labour amendment. Twenty-seven Conservative MPs were absent entirely. Previous research has demonstrated that the 2010 Parliament is, by historical standards, rebellious (Cowley and Stuart 2012a). Factionalism was evident early in the 2010 parliament with many new members at odds with the leadership on issues such as defence, taxation, and business. UK foreign policy is an issue that has revealed particularly deep differences although the focal point is often Europe (Cowley and Stuart 2012b). Using Heppell's mapping of the Conservative parliamentary party under Cameron, it is clear that the majority of rebellious MPs (18 out of 30, or 22 out of 39 if we count abstentions) in the Syrian vote were from a section of the parliamentary party populated by 'the implacable critics of Cameron'

(Heppell 2013: 348). These are MPs who are *both* hard eurosceptics and socially conservative, standing opposed to the soft euroscepticism and liberal conservatism of Cameron.

These MPs emphasised the pragmatic shortcomings of any proposed missile strike. Rebels and abstainers raised questions about the impact of strikes, arguing that it would not degrade Assad's chemical weapons stock, would do little to protect Syrian civilians, and could escalate the conflict and draw the UK in further. However, 45 MPs who can also be characterised as hard eurosceptics voted for the government motion. Within the Conservatives, there was thus a range of disparate views about the prudence of military strikes.

PM Leadership

Cameron's leadership style, and broader party management processes, exacerbated intraparty tensions, particularly those within the Conservative party. As one backbench Conservative MP put it, 'it all comes down to loyalty. Who do you want to be loyal to, your prime minister or your constituents? The point is that backbenchers know that Cameron doesn't really mean it, that he wouldn't die in a ditch for them' (Hardman 2013b). Such underlying tensions were aggravated by a distinct sense of confidence in Cameron's approach. Recalling Parliament in such a haphazard manner, attempting to rush through a vote before the UN inspectors completed their work, and refusing to disclose comprehensively the legal advice received by the UK Government, were all signs that Cameron underestimated the degree of opposition.

In addition, there are indications that the vote itself was poorly managed. Complicating matters considerably was Miliband's late decision to table an amendment and instruct Labour MPs to vote against the government. Had Miliband

not done this, almost certainly the government motion would have passed and likely with a huge majority.⁶ Alistair Burt observed that this ‘changed the arithmetic very markedly ... I was puzzled because the relationship with Labour on foreign affairs had always been a good one’ (*BBC* 2014). However, Cameron could also have accepted the Labour amendment. Such a move would have been politically dangerous as it would have allowed Miliband to claim he had steered the agenda, but it would have kept the UK on track to support any future led military action.

The day before the vote *The Spectator* observed that because Labour support might not come ‘until the last minute, it’s reasonable to expect that the [government] whips will be getting to work today’ (Hardman 2013a). Once Labour’s support was withdrawn, on the morning of the vote, the government was left with little time to organise and to convince their backbenchers to support its motion. Yet the necessary work had not gone in, over the preceding days, to secure support. Jim Fitzpatrick, a Labour MP who had served as a whip in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq vote, observed: ‘The government whips office had a mountain to climb. They clearly hadn’t had the opportunity to do the kind of work we’d done pre-2003 ... The terms were changing, the motion changed, the tone of the government response changed ... It looked like a botched job, which, for the whip’s office, is a cardinal sin’ (*BBC* 2014). A prudent Conservative leadership would have anticipated the need to mobilise support since Conservative backbenchers had previously signalled their worries about Cameron’s eagerness to involve the UK in the Syrian conflict (*Huffington Post* 2013).

One senior backbench Conservative cited this poor party management and a failure to prepare the ground as pivotal in the loss (Lilley 2013). In the days before the vote, scepticism amongst as many as 70 Conservative MPs was reported, deriving from a combination of a rushed timetable and a failure to make a compelling case for

intervention (Mason 2013). As the debate proceeded in the Commons, government whips were engaged in a too little, too late effort to bring rebels on board. Notes were passed around the chamber, wavering MPs were called in for last minute meetings with ministers and senior advisers, and party loyalty was invoked. However, the groundwork had not been laid in the days and weeks prior (*BBC* 2014).

Numerous news stories in the aftermath of the vote reported that Cameron and his senior Cabinet colleagues did not meet privately with many wavering backbenchers. According to the *Financial Times*, ‘plenty of rebels have told us in the last 48 hours they were not properly consulted before the vote, and that they might have changed their mind had they been talked through the prime minister’s reasoning’ (Stacey 2013). Similar criticism was directed at the government whips office (Rigby 2013; Groves 2013). In *The Telegraph*, a Conservative MP was quoted as saying that it felt like the whips just ‘couldn’t be bothered’ (Dominiczak and Tweedie 2013). Summing up, one Conservative minister was quoted saying, ‘it was a catalogue of errors. Bringing back parliament in a rush; failing to get Ed Miliband on board; failing to eke out enough support for the government motion despite having a working majority of 84: the whole thing is a shambles’ (Rigby 2013).

The Ghosts of Iraq and the Shadow of Tony Blair

A final contributing factor to Parliament’s role and the outcome of this vote, and one that has not been explored in previous research on parliamentary influence, was the memory of the Blair government’s decision to support the U.S. war against Iraq in 2003 and a more general sense of war fatigue. George Osborne, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, when asked about the Syria vote, remarked, ‘we just found a lot of fatigue about foreign intervention ... I would like the West to be more engaged but I

have to accept that that is not where British public opinion, and that is not where parliamentary opinion is' (*Charlie Rose* 2013). This response draws together many of the threads from the previous sections. Public opinion was clearly a factor but, rather than being a specific opposition to this military strike, there seemed to be 'a diffuse sense of public "fatigue" with overseas military interventions' (Clement 2012). As the debate was unfolding in Parliament, *The Spectator* magazine ran a story about how Cameron was attacking Blair's 'ghost' complete with a picture of Blair's spectre floating over the chamber (Hardman 2013c). Indeed, Cameron observed in his opening statement that 'the well of public opinion was well and truly poisoned by the Iraq episode' (Hansard 2013: Col. 1428).

Cameron dedicated a significant portion of his opening speech to differences between Iraq in 2003 and Syria in 2013 (Col. 1427-28). Yet during the debate, MPs returned to the case of Iraq and specifically to the abuse of intelligence that led MPs to support that effort. Miliband led the charge, framing much of his opening statement around 'the fact that we have got to learn the lessons of Iraq' (Col. 1433). Based on comments in the debate, such lessons included the appropriate and transparent use of intelligence, the soundness of the legal advice issued by the Attorney General (an issue that proved so divisive during and subsequent to the decision-making about Iraq), and the more general issue of trust in the government. A few MPs attempted to turn the issue of Iraq on its head, arguing either that the security and intelligence services must surely have learned the relevant lessons, or that the tragedy of the Iraq intervention should not be used to create the double tragedy of abandoning those in Syria who need assistance. In his closing statement, Clegg also invoked the 'double tragedy' (Col. 1546) argument but overall, the frequent invocations of Iraq held negative connotations.

Given that the vote came less than two years after MPs (the same set of MPs) backed the UK's intervention in Libya it may be far-fetched to read the 2013 vote as an abandonment of the UK's global role and interventionism because of the ghosts of Iraq in 2003. Rather, it seems that the complexity of the specific case and the shadow cast by Iraq combined to prevent Cameron from winning the vote at that time. Furthermore, one year following the Syrian vote, on 26 September 2014, Cameron secured a large parliament majority (524 votes to 43) for UK military intervention in Iraq to combat the growing threat of the Islamic State. There were several aspects of the 2014 Iraq intervention that made it easier for Cameron to secure parliamentary support. By the time the Commons convened to debate and vote, the Iraqi government had requested foreign assistance in their military struggle with the Islamic State and the U.S. had already committed to the operation. Cameron had also secured the explicit support of Miliband. With some MPs arguing, in that debate, in favour of extending the campaign against Islamic State into Syria, and with the PM stating that he reserved the right to act in the national interest or in an emergency before a parliamentary vote (Hansard 2014: Col. 1265), the debate was a stark reminder that the relationship between PMs and parliament on matters of war and peace remains a complicated and fascinating one.

Conclusion

This case, although unique for the UK, is consistent with what we know about parliamentary influence in security policy. It supports the view that the important factors for parliamentary influence are dynamic, in that they can change form from case to case and may evolve within an occasion for decision. Our analysis suggests

that the Commons' influence did not derive from a deep, structural shift in parliamentary authority, but rather from several mutually reinforcing factors – indirect influence of public opinion, intraparty factionalism, mismanagement by the leadership, and the spectre of Iraq. The formal powers of parliament remained weak although the norm of involving parliament in decisions to deploy military force arguably led Cameron to recall parliament.

In this case public opinion was a significant, but indirect, factor. While public scepticism may explain Cameron's decision to recall parliament, Miliband's positioning of the Labour party, and the decision of some MPs to vote against the government, politicians did not blindly follow public opinion. This is evident from the closeness of the vote and the reality that a majority of MPs voted to retain the option of force. This is consistent with research demonstrating that united elites can ignore or shape public opinion. It was division among elites that allowed for some representation of public opinion in the form of a parliamentary debate and vote.

Contra to some democratic peace research, in this case the junior coalition partner did not act as a brake on military action. The divided elite in this case was not the result of coalition politics; the governing parties were in agreement. The key division was within the Conservative party, the senior coalition partner, and was linked to longer-standing intraparty tensions. This is consistent with previous research on the constraining role party factions can play. It also suggests that further research is required on the role of political parties, and their ideological commitments and disagreements, in the area of foreign policy. Little systematic research exists on the topic (see Rathbun 2004; Özkececi-Taner 2009).

Intraparty factionalism does not translate automatically into parliamentary influence. A range of disciplinary and persuasive methods is available to party

leaders. Yet in this case party management was critically lacking. This is consistent with previous research, which shows that not all leaders respond rationally to constraints and challenges. Cameron seemed to misperceive the opposition on his own backbenches and underestimate the leadership required to secure votes.

A critical factor in this case that has no foundation in past work on parliaments and security policy is the significance of historical context. The ‘ghosts’ of Iraq and Blair affected both public and MP opinion. But this history was not determinate – the UK was willing to intervene in Libya (2011) and Iraq (2014) and the Syria vote was very close. We are unaware of work on the role of historical precedent as a factor enhancing parliamentary influence but similar instances come to mind. The passage of the War Powers Act by the U.S. Congress in 1973 was a reaction to Congressional weakness in the Vietnam War. Dutch deployments of troops in Afghanistan have been subject to delays and oversight by the Dutch parliament stemming from concerns to avoid another disaster like that experienced by Dutch troops in Srebrenica (Saideman and Auerswald 2012).

Research on individual-level information processing suggests that historical analogies and case-based reasoning can serve as a prism through which a current policy choice is perceived, evaluated, and acted upon (Khong 1992; Bruening 2003). Past experience may affect policy preferences, levels of trust, and policymaking processes. Iraq and Blair served as shortcuts and bases for arguments for more time, more evidence, and more involvement by parliament as a check on the executive. The role of historical precedent seems a particularly fruitful and novel area for research on parliaments and foreign policy.

Overall, although some aspects of this case seem fairly idiosyncratic (for example two government ministers failed to hear the bell calling them to vote), the case

resonates with extant research that points to dynamic constellations of factors beyond structural contexts and institutional rules. The Commons vote helps us better understand these factors and how they interact to enhance parliamentary influence in security policy.

NOTES

¹ In 1782 Lord North, then PM, lost a vote of no confidence following the British defeat at Yorktown.

² The Labour amendment differed in setting out a clearer and more structured role for the UN in any intervention and in calling for compelling evidence that the Syrian government was responsible for the chemical attacks.

³ For more detailed discussion of how this research challenges the conventional wisdom on parliamentary influence in foreign policy, see Author (2010).

⁴ For some efforts to increase parliament's involvement prior to the Iraq war see White (2003).

⁵ In testimony to the House of Lords the former foreign secretary Jack Straw suggested that the reason for inaction was simply a failure of the Brown government to prioritise the issue. Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister in the 2010-15 coalition government, observed that internal disagreement remained an obstacle within government to any bill formalising the convention of Commons' involvement and a vote (House of Lords 2013).

⁶ This remains one of the most bizarre aspects of the vote. 490 MPs in total voted for a motion that left open the possibility of a second vote, which may have authorized the use of UK military force. But those 490 votes were divided between a government motion and an opposition amendment. Both the PM and the leader of the opposition were in favour of keeping the possibility of using military force on the table and yet, following the vote, both were quick to declare publicly that such action was no longer an option.

References (All hyperlinks last accessed and checked on 10 February 2015)

- Andeweg, R. and Thomassen, J. (2010), 'Pathways to Party Unity: Sanctions, Loyalty, Homogeneity and Division of Labour in the Dutch Parliament', *Party Politics*, 17(5): 655-72.
- Ashdown, P. (2013), 'The use of poison gas cannot go unpunished', *The Times*, 26 August, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article3852296.ece>.
- Auerswald, D. (1999), 'Inward Bound: Domestic Institutions and Military Conflicts', *International Organization* 53: 469-504.
- BBC (2013a), 'David Cameron on Syria: we reserve the right to act without vote', 19 June, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22965495>.
- BBC (2013b), 'Syria crisis: UN complains after inspectors fired on', 26 August, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23843649>.
- BBC (2013c), 'Syria crisis: Russia and China step up warning over strike', 27 August, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-23845800>.
- BBC (2014), 'The Syria Vote: One Day in August', BBC Radio 4, 10 November, editor Richard Knight.
- Beech, M. (2011), 'British Conservatism and Foreign Policy: Traditions and Ideas Shaping Cameron's Global View', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 13(3): 348-63.
- Beech, M. and Oliver, T. (2014), 'Humanitarian Intervention and Foreign Policy in the Conservative-led Coalition', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 67(1): 102-18.
- Born, H. (2004) 'The Use of Force Under International Auspices: Strengthening Parliamentary Accountability', in H. Born and H. Hänggi (eds), *The Double Democratic Deficit* (Aldershot: Ashgate), 203-16.
- Bruening, M. (2003), 'The Role of Analogies and Abstract Reasoning in Decision-making: Evidence from the Debate over Truman's Proposal for Development Assistance', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47(2): 229-45.
- Burrall, S., Donnelly, B. and Weir, S. (2006) (eds), *Not in Our Name: Democracy and Foreign Policy in the UK* (London: Politico Publishing).

-
- Chulov, M. and Helm, T. (2013), 'Syria: Cameron and Obama move west closer to intervention', *The Observer*, 25 August, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/24/syria-cameron-obama-intervention>.
- Charlie Rose (2013), <http://charlierose.com/watch/60316772>.
- Clegg, N., Hughes, S., Ashdown, P. and Williams, S. (2013), 'Why we must act against Syria's chemical weapons', *London Evening Standard*, 29 August, <http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/why-we-must-act-against-syrias-chemical-weapons-8789128.html>.
- Clement, B. (2012), 'Public Opinion and Military Intervention: Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya', *The Political Quarterly*, 84(1): 119-31.
- Damrosch, L. (2003), 'The Interface of National Constitutional Systems with International Law and Institutions Using Military Forces: Changing Trends in Executive and Legislative Powers', in C. Ku and H.K. Jacobsen (eds), *Democratic Accountability and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 39-60.
- DCAF [Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces] (2006), 'Sending Troops Abroad', <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Sending-Troops-Abroad>.
- Dicey, A.V. (1959), *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, 10th ed. (London: Macmillan).
- Dieterich, S., Hummel, H. and Marschall, S. (2008), 'Strengthening Parliamentary "War Powers" in Europe: Lessons from 25 National Parliaments', *Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces*, Policy Paper No. 27 (Geneva).
- Dominiczak, P. and Tweedie, N. (2013), 'Syria: the finger of blame for David Cameron's Commons defeat', *The Telegraph*, 30 August, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10276370/Syria-the-finger-of-blame-for-David-Camerons-Commons-defeat.html>.
- Dyson, S.B. (2006), 'Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2(3): 289-306.

-
- Elman, M. (2000), 'Unpacking Democracy: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism and Theories of Democratic Peace', *Security Studies*, 9(4): 91-126.
- Evans, P., Jacobson, H. and Putnam, R. (1993), *Double-Edged Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Financial Times* (2013), 'US, France and Britain gear up for cruise missile strike on Syria', 27 August, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4aba4736-0ef3-11e3-ae66-00144feabdc0.html#axzz30pAdA7xJ>.
- Gaskarth, J. (2013), *British Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Greene, O. (2004), 'Democratic Governance and the Internationalisation of Security Policy: The Relevance of Parliaments', in H. Born and H. Hänggi (eds), *The Double Democratic Deficit* (Aldershot: Ashgate), 19-32.
- Groves, J. (2013), 'Six ministers who missed the vote: Chief whip under fire as shambles in Commons is exposed', *The Daily Mail*, 30 August, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2406731/Ministers-missed-vote-Chief-Whip-shambles-Commons-exposed.html>.
- The Guardian* (2013), 'Syrian rebels will not be armed without MPs approval, says William Hague', 9 June, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/09/syrian-rebels-armed-mps-approval-william-hague>.
- Hagan, J. (1993), *Political Opposition and Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner).
- Hagan, J. and Hermann, M. (2001), 'Leaders, Groups and Coalitions: Understanding the People and Processes in Foreign Policymaking', *International Studies Review*, 3(2), pp. 169-216.
- Hansard (2011), *House of Commons Debates*, 6th series, vol. 525, 21 March.
- Hansard (2013), *House of Commons Debates*, 6th series, vol. 566, 29 August.
- Hansard (2014), *House of Commons Debates*, 26 September, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm140926/debtext/140926-0001.htm>.

-
- Hardman, I. (2013a), 'How will the Tory whips handle tomorrow's Syria vote?', *The Spectator*, 28 August, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/08/how-will-the-tory-whips-handle-tomorrows-syria-vote/>.
- Hardman, I. (2013b), 'David Cameron attacks Blair's ghost in Syria debate', *The Spectator*, 29 August, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/08/david-cameron-attacks-blairs-ghost-in-syria-debate/>.
- Hardman, I. (2013c), 'Syria defeat: what happened to the whips?', *The Spectator*, 29 August, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2013/08/syria-defeat-what-happened-to-the-whips/>.
- Hazan, R. (2000), 'Intraparty Politics and Peacemaking in Democratic Societies: Israel's Labour Party and the Middle East Peace Process, 1992-96', *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(3): 363-78.
- Heffernan, R. (2005), 'Why the Prime Minister Cannot be a President: Comparing Institutional Imperatives in Britain and America', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 58(1): 53-70.
- Hill, C. (2003), *The Changing Politics of British Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Holsti, O. (2002), 'Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Analysis', in M. Brecher and F. Harvey (ed), *Millennial Reflections on International Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press) 514-28.
- House of Commons (2004), *Taming the Prerogative: Strengthening Ministerial Accountability to Parliament*, Public Administration Select Committee, 4th Report of Session 2003-04 (London: HMSO).
- House of Lords (2006), *Waging War: Parliament's Role and Responsibility*, Select Committee on the Constitution, 15th Report of Session 2005-06 (London: HMSO).
- House of Lords (2013) *Constitutional Arrangements for the Use of Armed Force*, Select Committee on the Constitution, 2nd Report of Session 2013-14 (London: HMSO).
- Huffington Post* (2013), '81 Tory MPs write to David Cameron to demand vote on arming Syrian rebels', 6 June, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/06/syria-tory-mps-vote-cameron_n_3395757.html.

-
- Joseph, R. (2013), *The War Prerogative: History, Reform and Constitutional Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Kam, C. (2009), *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Kellner, P. (2013), 'Syria and the Shadow of Iraq', *YouGov Commentary*, 28 August, <http://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/08/28/syria-and-shadow-iraq/>.
- Kent Weaver, R. and Rockman, B. (1993), *Do Institutions Matter?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution).
- Kreps, S. (2010), 'Elite Consensus as a Determinant of Alliance Cohesion: Why Public Opinion Hardly matters for NATO-led Operations in Afghanistan', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 3(6): 191-215.
- Ku, C. (2004) 'Using Military Force Under International Auspices: A Mixed System of Accountability', in H. Born and H. Hänggi (eds), *The Double Democratic Deficit* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 33-51.
- Leblang, D. and Chan, S. (2003), 'Explaining Wars Fought by Established Democracies: Do Institutional Constraints Matter?', *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(4): 385-400.
- Liberal Democrats (2010), *Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010*, http://network.libdems.org.uk/manifesto2010/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf.
- Lilley, P. (2013), 'Parliament has finally woken up – because voters are keeping their MPs in line', *The Spectator*, 7 September, <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9011881/parliament-has-finally-woken-up-because-voters-are-keeping-their-mps-in-line/>.
- Maoz, Z. and Russett, B. (1993), 'Normative and Structural Causes of the Democratic Peace, 1946-1986', *American Political Science Review*, 87(3): 624-38.
- Martin, L. (2001), 'International and Domestic Institutions in the EMU Process and Beyond', in B. Eichengreen and J.A. Frieden (eds), *The Political Economy of Monetary Unification* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), 131-56.

-
- Mason, R. (2013), 'Up to 70 Tory MPs "not convinced" by coalition case for Syria strike', *The Guardian*, 28 August, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/aug/28/70-tories-not-convinced-syria-strike>.
- Mello, P. (2012), 'Parliamentary Peace or Partisan Politics? Democracies' Participation in the Iraq War', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 15(3): 420-53.
- Morris, R. (2013), 'Why the Lib Dems are Silent on Syria', *The New Statesman*, 28 August, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/08/why-lib-dems-are-silent-syria>.
- Özkeçeci-Taner, B. (2009), *The Role of Ideas in Coalition Government Foreign Policymaking: The Case of Turkey between 1991 and 2002* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishers).
- Pahre, R. (1997), 'Endogenous Domestic Institutions in Two-level Games and Parliamentary Oversight in the European Union', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 41(1): 147-74.
- Palmer, G., T. London, and P. Regan. (2004), 'What's Stopping You?: The Sources of Political Constraints on International Conflict Behavior in Parliamentary Democracies', *International Interactions* 30: 1-24.
- Peters, D. and Wagner, W. (2011), 'Between Military Efficiency and Democratic Legitimacy: Mapping Parliamentary War Powers in Contemporary Democracies, 1989-2004', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 64(2): 175-92.
- Peterson, S. (1995), 'How Democracies Differ: Public Opinion, State Structure, and the Lessons of the Fashoda Crisis', *Security Studies*, 5(1): 3-37.
- Pickard, J., Aglionby, J., and Kuchler, H. (2013), 'Cameron urges MPs not to be paralysed by "spectre" of Iraq', *Financial Times*, 29 August, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9b999b34-107e-11e3-b291-00144feabdc0.html#axzz30pAdA7xJ>.
- Putnam, R. (1988), 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-level Games', *International Organization*, 42(3): 3-37.
- Rachman, G. (2013), 'Politics: A Leader Humbled, a Nation Cut Down to Size', *Financial Times*, 30 August, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3e92a36a-11a3-11e3-8321-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2exc7baPf>.

-
- Rathbun, B. (2004), *Partisan Interventions: European Party Politics and Peace Enforcement in the Balkans* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- Raunio, T. and Wiberg, M. (2001), 'Parliamentarizing Foreign Policy Decision Making', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 36(1): 61-86.
- Reiter, D. and Tillman, E. (2002), 'Public, Legislative, and Executive Constraints on the Democratic Initiation of Conflict', *Journal of Politics*, 64(3): 810-26.
- Rigby, E. (2013), 'Cameron strives to recover his authority after Syria setback', *Financial Times*, 30 August, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b09daf78-1198-11e3-8321-00144feabdc0.html#axzz30pAdA7xJ>.
- Rigby, E. and Pickard, J. (2013), 'UK politicians call for proof of Syrian chemical weapons attacks', *Financial Times*, 27 August, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3009a08a-0f3e-11e3-8e58-00144feabdc0.html#axzz30pAdA7xJ>.
- Ross, T. (2013), 'Cameron seeks UN resolution authorising military strikes on Syria', *The Telegraph*, 28 August, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10270565/Cameron-seeks-UN-resolution-authorising-military-strikes-on-Syria.html>.
- Saideman, S. and Auerswald, D. (2012), 'Comparing Caveats: Understanding the Sources of National Restrictions upon NATO's Mission in Afghanistan', *International Studies Quarterly*, 56(1): 67-84.
- Schuster, J. and Maier, H. (2006), 'The Rift: Explaining Europe's Divergent Iraq Policies in the Run-up to the America-led War on Iraq', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 3(2): 223-44.
- Stacey, K., Spiegel, P., and Chaffin, J. (2013), 'UK willing to defy EU on Syrian arms', *Financial Times*, 12 March, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f966e99a-8b3d-11e2-b1a4-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2fVxakAKM>.
- Strong, J. (2014), 'Why Parliament Now Decides on War: Tracing the Growth of the Parliamentary Prerogative through Syria, Libya and Iraq', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, doi: 10.1111/1467-856X.12055 (Online early view).
- Wagner, W. (2006), 'The Democratic Control of Military Power Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13(2): 200-16.

White, N. (2003), 'The United Kingdom: Increasing Commitment Requires Greater Parliamentary Involvement', in C. Ku and H.K. Jacobsen (eds), *Democratic Accountability and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 300-22.

YouGov (2013), 'Syria tracker', http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/opa8mh4pfg/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Syria-290813.pdf.